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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-fourth session
Item 5 of the agenda

ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE RACIST AND COLONIALIST REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA

Letter dated 30 July 1992 from the Director of the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

Thank you for the invitation to the forty-fourth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (3 to 28 August 1992).

I regret to inform you that the Special Committee against Apartheid is unable to send an observer to your meeting. The Chairman of the Special Committee would appreciate if the attached message be transmitted to the Sub-Commission.

(Signed) Johan Nordenfelt
Director
Centre against Apartheid

GE.92-12935/4848H

MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. IBRAHIM GAMBARI (NIGERIA), CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID TO THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

3 to 28 August 1992

Geneva, Switzerland

1. On behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid and on my own behalf, I wish to thank you for your kind invitation to the forty-fourth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

2. The Special Committee strongly supports this significant forum which has championed the cause of those discriminated against due to their race, language or religion as well as the plight of minorities. In the tumultuous times in which we live in, it is essential that we continue to focus our concern on these important issues as they relate to basic human rights, notably in areas under conflict.

3. The Special Committee, since its inception, has within its mandate of acting as the focal point of the international campaign against apartheid, given priority to human rights in South Africa. For decades Black citizens of South Africa have lived under oppressive conditions of apartheid. As the world is fully aware, this system represents a massive violation of fundamental rights of human beings, depriving them of basic freedoms, including the right to vote, the right to participate as equals in determining their own destiny.

4. The Commission on Human Rights has reported over 2,370 politically-related deaths in South Africa since the signing of the National Peace Accord in September 1991. The right to protection of life under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is constantly ignored in South Africa. Recent reports indicate that up to 200 persons may have been killed in South African prisons. The right to life is man's single most important right; it is violated on a daily basis in South Africa.

5. The inhabitants in the South African townships do not only live under intolerable socio-economic conditions, but also have to deal with perpetual terror and fear from the escalating violence in their communities. The international community was horrified by the recent manifestation of this persistent violence in the massacre of Boipatong wherein at least 40 persons were killed. The gravity of the problem prompted the Organization of African Unity to ask for an emergency meeting of the Security Council, which met on 15 to 16 July 1992. The Council, after listening to Member States as well as the liberation movements and political parties from South Africa, adopted resolution 765 (1992) which condemned the violence and called upon all parties to cooperate in combating it. In particular, it urged the South African authorities to take immediate measures to bring an end to the violence and to bring to justice those found responsible. As requested in the resolution,

the Secretary-General of the United Nations urgently dispatched his Special Representative to discuss with all parties in that country and recommend measures to bring an effective end to the raging violence and help restore the process of negotiations.

6. The convening of the Sub-Commission thus comes at an opportune time, as South Africans look to the international community for assistance in a situation that threatens their daily existence and jeopardizes their chances of establishing a non-racial and democratic society. They need the solid support of the international community, particularly at this time, in ensuring that obstacles on their path would finally be removed and the road open towards a new non-racial and democratic South Africa.

7. The provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been incorporated into the legal systems of many countries. It is important that, as the process towards a new, non-racial and democratic constitution in South Africa is resumed, the principles contained in the Declaration find a clear expression in South Africa's new constitution. We all look forward to be able to welcome South Africa as a State party to the Human Rights Covenants and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

8. The task of the Sub-Commission to safeguard man's fundamental freedoms is undoubtedly a most significant endeavour that remains crucial not only for the difficulties which continue to besiege South Africa, but for all men, women and children in every forgotten corner of the world, who still do not enjoy their basic rights, who suffer exploitation in any manner.

9. The Special Committee wishes success to the Sub-Commission in its noble endeavour with the hope that their good work continue for the greater benefit of mankind.